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MEDIAN ART AND MEDIZING SCHOLARSHIP*

Oscar White Muscarella, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

MORE than two decades have passed since Géza de Francovitch wrote that Median art "is a myth," that "not a single work exists of proven Median origin," and, further, that its discussion involves one in "the realm of myth and fable . . . ."[1] That this strongly presented view still obtains, is still forcibly valid, even more so after the excavation of two apparent Median sites in western Iran, and after the appearance of more scholarly writings that claim to have unraveled and perceived the characteristics of Median art, will be the conclusion of this paper.

The political and social history of the Medes is difficult to chart and reconstruct in any of its specifics and at any point in time, and here we can only deal with it in the broadest terms.[2] The sources are primarily the contemporary, often terse references in the Assyrian annals and records that begin in the ninth century B.C. (836 B.C.) and continue into the seventh, the brief but significant references in the seventh–sixth century sections of the Babylonian Chronicle, and the later fifth-century B.C. writings of Herodotus (1.95–106). The Assyrian annals indicate that the Medes were powerful and occupied many towns and cities, each under a chieftain, they were attacked periodically by the Assyrians, and they fought with their neighbors. By the last two or three decades of the seventh century, some political events unknown to us had occurred, for by this time the Medes (or some Medes) became united under one king. This unification strengthened them to the degree that in the years between 614 and 609 B.C. under Cyaxares, "the king of the Medes," they invaded Mesopotamia and participated in the destruction of the Assyrian state. By 585 B.C. it seems that Cyaxares had secured control over most of the peoples of western Iran including the Persians, and he or his son Astyages had advanced to the Halys river in Anatolia, where he maintained a border with the powerful Lydians. Within a generation all was lost. Cyrus II, the king of the Persians, rebelled against his father-in-law Astyages and in turn subjugated the Medes (553–550 B.C.). With this event began a new and, from a modern perspective, decidedly clearer phase of Iranian and Near Eastern history.

The heartland of the Medes in western Iran centered around Hamadan (Ecbatana) and extended for some distance to the southwest, northeast, and east in the Alvand mountain range.[3] The Assyrian annals record wealthy Median cities, but the only

* I wish to thank Susan Patullo for her comments on various aspects of this paper.

[1] Géza de Francovitch, "Problems of Achaemenid Architecture," *East and West* 16 (1966): 257.

[2] I present here only the barest outline. Recent important research makes it clear that we know far less about Median history than hitherto assumed; see, in particular, Payton R. Helm, "Herodotus' *Medikos Logos* and Median History," *Iran* 19 (1981): 85–90, with bibliography.

[3] A number of scholars have argued that the Median area of control extended as far northeast as Tehran on the assumption that the Mt. Bikni associated with the Medes in the Assyrian records is Mt. Damavand. However, L. D. Levine, "Geographical Studies in the Neo-Assyrian Zagros-II," *Iran* 12 (1974): 118 f., nn. 167, 168, following König, correctly demonstrated that Mt. Bikni is most

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kinds of booty mentioned are weapons, cattle, donkeys, horses, camels, and, rarely, lapis lazuli,[4] the latter without doubt acquired by Median trade further east. By the time of their unification or shortly thereafter, they seem to have acquired the means to supply themselves with more substantial wealth. This may be inferred from the sixth-century B.C. section of the Babylonian Chronicle (7.ii, 3–4)[5] that records Cyrus's defeat of Astyages: "Cyrus (marched) to Ecbatana, the royal city. The silver, gold, goods, property . . . which he carried off as booty (from) Ecbatana, he took to Anshan." The Chronicle does not define the nature and characteristics of the precious metals or of the goods and property, except to record that portable material is being discussed. Thus, whether the gold and silver was in the form of bullion or crafted artifacts, and whether Median *Kleinkunst* or state or religious objects were included in the spoils, is not vouchsafed. But something valuable was taken by Cyrus from Ecbatana, and I do not believe one can exclude the possibility that these valuables included products of Median craftsmen.

There is yet another possible interpretation that may be brought forth regarding the nature of the spoils taken from Ecbatana, an interpretation suggested to me by T. Cuyler Young, Jr.: the spoils could have been booty that the Medes themselves took from the Assyrians more than a half-century earlier. Explicitly argued in this view (assuming it means that only Assyrian valuables were kept at Ecbatana) is the conclusion that, for whatever reasons, the Medes chose not to or could not employ their own craftsmen to create works. Indeed, this conclusion is one that could follow after the fact, so to speak, after reviewing the evidence presented in the main body of this paper. But that evidence allows one only to recognize what does or does not exist as a result of modern discovery, not what *may* have actually existed in the sixth century B.C. I am of course aware of the limitations in the use of the Babylonian Chronicle to prove the existence of Median art and artifacts, whether we posit them to be mundane objects or sumptuous products of a *Staatskunst* (infra), just as I am aware of its limitations for disproving such existence. Here I am merely exploring the range of possible interpretations, rather than attempting to make definitive statements.

That the gold and silver recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle may not have been solely in the form of bullion or Assyrian booty and may have included objects crafted by Median artisans is perhaps suggested, albeit tenuously, by the later inscription of Darius at Susa (DSf). Here we read that "the goldsmiths who wrought the gold, those were Medes and Egyptians"; the very same people are also said to be the ones who "adorned the walls."[6] Whatever the meaning of "adorned,"[7] the Medes were working together with Egyptians as goldsmiths, which suggests, even if it does not prove, that some tradition of Median goldworking existed prior to the early fifth century B.C. Whether this tradition existed in pre-Cyrus times or began during his or Darius's reign

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probably a mountain in the Alvand range, near Hamadan. J. Reade, "Kassites and Assyrians in Iran," *Iran* 16 (1978): 38, continues to support the Bikni-Damavand connection.

[4] D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (Chicago, 1926), vol. 1, pars. 795, 812; vol. 2, pars. 540, 566.

[5] For the references to the Babylonian Chronicle mentioned here and elsewhere in the text, see A. K. Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles* (Locust Valley, New York, 1975), pp. 91, 106.

[6] R. G. Kent, *Old Persian* (New Haven, 1950), p. 144.

[7] M. C. Root, *The King and Kingship in Achaemenid Art* (Leiden, 1979), pp. 7 ff.

is not vouchsafed, but—again, perhaps—the evidence of the Ecbatana spoils would support the former position.[8]

Given then both the historical background of a powerful, united Median state in the late seventh–early sixth century B.C. and the references to silver and gold objects, scholars have posited that a Median art and iconography probably existed by the late seventh century and perhaps earlier, and that objects of sumptuous and courtly quality, inter alia, were crafted by Medes. To give one example of the thought process concerning what might be expected of the Medes, M. Root states, "It is not unlikely that at important centers such as Ecbatana buildings were adorned with sculptures in stone or glazed brick relief. Also, a tradition of monumental representational art may well have been maintained . . . such as wall painting and wooden relief."[9] This observation is viable, as are those postulating the existence of portable Median art, *Kleinkunst,* as well as sumptuous works. Such assumptions not only do not conflict with, but are based on our perceptions of the interrelationships of ancient Near Eastern art and politics. In this context, scholars might also anticipate a Median writing system for economic and political transactions and major architecture to accommodate the royal family as well as local officials.

Before proceeding further, brief, but pertinent, comments and a caveat on the terms Mede and Median art are called for. A people called Medes, distinct from other peoples in western Iran, are known in Iran from the ninth century B.C. By the last two decades of the seventh century there is a "Median" army under a king, the implication of this being that a central Median authority is present. Is it legitimate to assume that by the later seventh century the Median kingdom incorporated other peoples in western Iran who were thereby considered to be Medes in a political sense and who were components of the Median army? The Babylonian Chronicle (3.5) records that the Manneans in 616 B.C. were still a distinct political entity, inasmuch as they were allies of the Assyrians against the Babylonians, which signifies that not all western Iranians (meaning here peoples living in western Iran regardless of languages spoken) were included in the Median state at this time. But what of the Manneans a few years later, and what of others, Harhar, Missi, Ellipi, etc., who cease to be mentioned in the late Assyrian texts? Was there a Media before and a Greater Media after the last decade or two of the seventh century B.C.? Would Median material culture and iconography in the earlier period basically reflect one form, purely Median, and in the later another composed of several cultures? And if so, what part was "ethnically" Median and what parts "Ellipian," "Mannaean," "Missian," etc.? Indeed, only Media is mentioned in 550 B.C. when Cyrus defeats Astyages, but what is Media? We do not know the answers to all the questions posed. As we have no conception concerning the artistic and iconographic nature of most of the peoples and political entities of western Iran (excepting Luristan) either before or after the late seventh century, any attempt to isolate Median art must take into account both the complex cultural and ethnic

[8] Root (ibid., p. 32, n. 95) claims that Median craftsmen worked at Nebuchadezzar's court, but from the reference she supplies, it is far from certain that the Medes in Babylon were craftsmen; the word *ba-ak-tu* is not a craft designation (Ira Spar, private communication).

[9] Ibid., pp. 32 f.

background of the area and the question of precisely at what time and where in Iran our attention is being focused.[10]

Now, having in mind from the above discussion an anticipation of what might be reflected in the archaeological record with regard to the culture of the "Medes," what "must have existed," what in reality do we have? First of all there is no Median writing extant in Median or in Elamite script, not a single sign on any object, artifact, or work of art.[11] With regard to architecture an apparently different situation exists. In the mid-1960s two almost certainly Median sites were excavated, Godin Tepe (Period II) and Nush-i Jan, southwest and south of Hamadan respectively.[12] Both sites were founded sometime in the late eighth century B.C., that is, at a time before the unification under one king, presumably Cyaxares. They both have a large building with a multi-columned hall, a form known earlier at Hasanlu in northwestern Iran and later at Pasargadae and Persepolis; Nush-i Jan has, in addition, a fort and two fire temples, all remarkably well preserved. Ecbatana remains unexcavated,[13] hence these two sites will serve as the focus of future research on Median architectural features and characteristics.

It must be noted and stressed that it is precisely the coincidence of their chronological position and geographical location that permits archaeologists to designate the two sites as Median with little reservation, for if they had been uncovered elsewhere in Iran, they could have been assigned to different peoples. But whereas their massive building remains inform us of the existence of Median architects, of their building techniques and plans and their secular and religious structures, both sites yielded not a single artifact (except pottery) or motif that distinguishes itself as Median, let alone as Median art or iconography. This lack may be explained by the possibly historically significant fact that both sites were abandoned, and little aside from scraps and pottery was left behind. Whatever the reasons, there is no Median art represented at the only two assumed Median sites excavated to date (see infra).

[10] See D. Stronach, "Excavations at Nush-i Jan, 1967," *Iran* 7 (1969): 4, and Helm, "Herodotus," p. 87. Some of the thoughts expressed here have been sharpened by conversations with T. Cuyler Young, Jr. See also my brief cautionary comments in *Journal of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (*MMJ*) 1 (1968): 17 f.

[11] Thus, John Curtis, *Nush-i Jan III: The Small Finds* (London, 1984), p. 14, correctly refrains from identifying as Median a few broken cuneiform signs incised on a silver fragment (pl. 8, 100) from Nush-i Jan. The absence of Median writing, of course, does not mean that it never existed; see I. M. Diakonov apud R. Ghirshman in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 15, no. 6 (1958): 260. The pre-Achaemenian Persians used Elamite for their inscriptions, as is evidenced by sealings from Persepolis with the inscription, "Cyrus of Anshan, son of Teispes."

[12] T. Cuyler Young, Jr., *Excavations at Godin Tepe: First Progress Report* (Toronto, 1967); T. Cuyler Young, Jr. and L. D. Levine, *Excavations at Godin Tepe: Second Progress Report* (Toronto, 1974). D. Stronach's reports on Nush-i Jan have been published in *Iran* 1969, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1978; see also Curtis, *Nush-i Jan III*. W. Kleiss, "Zwei Plätze des 6. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. in iranisch Azerbaidjan," *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* (*AMI*) 9 (1976): 114 ff., emphatically considers a surveyed site, Chorbulag, northeast of Maku in northwestern Iran, with sixth-century B.C. pottery, to be "... der Anlage um einen medischen Herrensitz" (p. 114) and "... das einzige Gebäude im Nordteil von Iranisch-Azerbaidjan, das von den Medern errichtet worden ist" (p. 116). Yet, while the site may date to the Median period in general terms, it may not be called Median in the narrow, ethnic sense. There is no evidence that Baba Jan (C. Goff, "Excavations at Baba Jan: The Pottery and Metal from Levels III and II," *Iran* 16 [1978]: 41 f.) is Median.

[13] A few sondages have been made there. A large number of unexcavated objects, some ancient, some modern forgeries (infra), have been assigned to Hamadan by dealers and scholars with the assumption, implicitly or explicitly expressed, that they are Median; see my "Excavated and Unexcavated Achaemenian Art," in D. Schmandt-Besserat, ed., *Ancient Persia: The Art of an Empire* (Malibu, 1980), pp. 31 ff.

Median art, objects implicitly or explicitly assumed to have been made by Medes, has been identified by scholars among the precious material found or allegedly found beside the Oxus River, among finds from the Caucasus and Soviet Union and among objects or elements in the so-called Ziwiye treasure. Also considered to be examples of Median art are a number of stray unexcavated objects, some ancient, others not, which are claimed by dealers and cooperating scholars to have derived from western Iran. A series of rock-cut tombs in Iran and Iraq and a few objects actually excavated in western Iran complete the "corpus" of putative Median art. To these putative Median creations we now turn for review.

* * *

When O. M. Dalton published (1926) the British Museum's collection of material claimed to have been found at a site on the Oxus River in 1877, he singled out among the manifestly Achaemenian objects two that he believed "appear to be older than the time of the Persians," and which "may have a Median origin" or which "provisionally" may be ascribed "to that Median art of which so little is known . . . ."[14] Considered to be Median were a gold bowl (no. 18) decorated with six pairs of rampant winged lions separated by a lobe, and a gold *akinakes* sheath (no. 22) decorated with a scene, repeated five times, of a horseman shooting arrows at a rampant lion. Criteria used to establish the tentative Median attribution were the stylization of the lions on the bowl, the apparent Assyrian influences of the hunt scene, and the high tiara headdress on the horseman. In 1921 E. Herzfeld accepted the sheath as "medische Arbeit," and in 1941 he added the gold plaques from the Oxus group.[15]

R. D. Barnett in 1957, 1962, and 1968 transformed Dalton's tentative attribution into a certainty.[16] Discussing only the sheath, he correctly compared it in form and scalloped border decoration to the example represented on the well-known Audience Hall (Apadana) relief, where it is worn by a Mede. Because of its presence on this

[14] O. M. Dalton, *The Treasure of the Oxus* . . . (1926; London, 1964), nn. 2, 10: in the first, 1905, publication, only the sheath was singled out, pp. 18, xvi, xxii. For my comments on the provenience of the treasure, see my 1980 paper, "Excavated and Unexcavated Achaemenian Art," p. 26. I wish to make two modifications to that paper: it was R. D. Barnett, not Dalton, who wrote the preface to the 1964 edition quoted on p. 27; and it should have been made clearer that the silver rhyton published by Dalton, lx (not XL), no. 178, was not claimed to be part of the Oxus treasure (p. 30) but, rather, from an alleged separate find at Erzerum.

In two recent articles by B. A. Litvinskiy and I. R. Pichikyan, "The Temple of the Oxus," *JRAS* 1981, pp. 134 ff.; and "Monuments of Art from the Sanctuary of Oxus," *Acta Antiqua* 27 (1983): 25 ff., it is claimed as an archaeological fact ("indisputable") that the site of Takht-i Sangin on the right bank of the Oxus River is *the* site from which the Oxus treasure derived. Other than nineteenth-century opinions, the sole piece of archaeological information offered to support this claim is the discovery at the site of an extraordinary ivory *akinakes* sheath (*JRAS,* 1981, pl. 1; *Acta Antiqua,* 1983, fig. 2) decorated in relief with a rampant lion clutching a stag. Because this sheath is the same size as the gold example from the treasure (26.7 cm) and, to the authors, of the same date, the ivory find "tends to confirm the traditional opinion about the find spot of the Oxus Treasure . . . . " But on their own merits alone, the date of the sheath, found in a third-century B.C. temple with third-century B.C. material, as well as its find-spot cannot possibly support the fiat that the original site of the Oxus treasure is now revealed. I refuse to accept the claim and find its absoluteness not proper in archaeological discourse.

[15] Dalton, *Treasure of the Oxus,* pls. 14 and 15; E. Herzfeld, "Kattische und khaldische Bronzen," in K. Regling and H. Reich, eds., *Festschrift zu C. F. Lehmann-Haupts sechzigsten Geburtstage* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1921), p. 154; idem, *Iran in the Ancient East* (London, 1941), pp. 205, 267 f. See also H. H. von der Osten, *Die Welt der Perser* (Stuttgart, 1956), p. 54, pl. 73, for other items added to the list of Median objects in the treasure.

[16] R. D. Barnett, "Persepolis," *Iraq* 19 (1957): 76; idem, "Median Art," *Iran. Antiqua* 2 (1962): 77–95, esp. 78–80; idem, "The Art of Bactria and the Treasure of the Oxus," *Iran. Antiqua* 8 (1968): 36, 38.

relief, the *akinakes* sheath is "a traditional Median type of scabbard," and the scalloped border on the Oxus sheath "betrays it as Median . . . ."[17] Having thus concluded that the *akinakes* is peculiar to Medes, Barnett then leaped from a culturally-ethnically defined object to a chronological position, automatically perceiving the Oxus sheath as Median in a pre-Achaemenian sense, a product of the seventh century B.C. And so positive was he of this attribution that he claimed forcefully and without qualification that the horseman on the Oxus sheath "can only be Astyages himself."

Over the following years E. Porada, W. Culican, M. van Loon, E. Akurgal, and A. Farkas also considered the Oxus sheath to be Median, both culturally and chronologically.[18] Among them, van Loon further discussed the Oxus gold bowl, which, following Dalton, he considered to be Median; and he identified the horseman on the sheath not as Astyages, but "probably Cyaxares," thereby dating the sheath still earlier in the Median period than did Barnett.

R. Ghirshman not only vigorously supported Herzfeld's and Barnett's conclusions concerning the Oxus sheath and gold plaques,[19] but expanded the perception of Median art and culture by presenting as parallels to the gold plaques some unexcavated bronze plaques that he believed derived from Luristan and which, in his view of archaeology, culturally connected the two distant areas. To Ghirshman, the art of Luristan is obviously Cimmerian; that it is also in part Median is revealed by the plaques and by a bronze spouted vessel with rear appliqué excavated at Hamadan (infra) that compares with others he believed were excavated in Luristan. By some unexplained process, these occurrences result in "une symbiose médo-cimmérienne," with both peoples sharing religious views and cultural identities. Whatever this means, it will be noted below that when discussing Median art and its characteristics as manifested at Ziwiye, Ghirshman forgot or chose not to mention Luristan; at Ziwiye a different symbiosis is revealed.

Barnett's writings specifically demonstrate that it is the *akinakes* sheath form itself that generated the impulse to perceive the Oxus example not only as a characteristic Median weapon but one necessarily made during the Median period. A disinterested investigation of the evidence, however, indicates a broader use and a longer life for this type of object than recognized. In the first place, on the Persepolis reliefs the *akinakes* sheath is worn by Medes (assuming that all those figures wearing trousers and the *akinakes* are in fact Medes),[20] Medes, let it be stressed, living in the fifth century B.C. But there is more to record about the ethnic background of those who wore the *akinakes*. Aside from the Medes (Delegation I), on the Apadana reliefs they are worn or carried by Scythians (Delegation XI) and by Delegation XVII, who are either Scythians, Sogdians, or Chorasmians. Further, on the tomb reliefs they are

[17] Idem, "Median Art," pp. 79 f. For the Persepolis relief sheath, see E. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1953), pl. 120.

[18] E. Porada, *The Art of Ancient Iran* (New York, 1965), p. 140; W. Culican, *The Medes and Persians* (New York, 1965), p. 140; M. van Loon, *Urartian Art* (Istanbul, 1966), p. 178; E. Akurgal, *Urartäische und altiranische Kunstzentren* (Ankara, 1968), p. 124; A. Farkas, "The Horse and Rider in Achaemenid Art," *Persica* 4 (1969): 69 ff.

[19] R. Ghirshman, "Le Trésor de l'Oxus, les bronzes du Luristan et l'art mède," in *Vorderasiatische Archäologie* (Moortgat Festschrift) (Berlin, 1964), pp. 88–94, esp. 88–90; idem, *The Arts of Ancient Iran* (New York, 1964), pp. 90–94.

[20] Root, *King and Kingship*, p. 98, n. 169; see also pp. 277; 279, n. 144; 281 f.; and further comments below.

worn by thirteen *Völker* in addition to the Medes.[21] In short, the *akinakes* is not and cannot be associated solely with Medes (see also notes 14, 23, and the Kelermes and Litoy-Melgunov sheaths, below).

Of course Barnett was right to introduce the Audience Hall relief sheath as an appropriate parallel to the Oxus sheath, but he was in error when he misread its chronological message. The scalloped border and animal frieze scene on the body of the relief sheath are explicit and formal parallels, parallels that indicate an Achaemenian attribution for the Oxus sheath. The hunt scene on the latter is Achaemenian in style and spirit and occurs on a number of Achaemenian period seals where royal and apparently other figures are depicted hunting animals from horseback, on camels, from chariots, and on foot.[22] And the high headdress worn by the horseman, as Moorey has noted in his argument for an Achaemenian date for the sheath, "may be the turban [*sic*] worn by a number of the peoples within the Achaemenid Empire . . . ."[23] (The headdress seems not to be a turban, but the general idea still obtains.) To identify, and with certainty, the horseman as a specific Median king, of whom we know little historically and nothing art-historically, even assuming the sheath to be pre-Achaemenian in date, transgresses the boundaries of archaeological activity, all the more so when we recognize the Achaemenian, probably fifth century B.C., depiction before us. And consequent to the fact that all horseman in the Achaemenian period wore trousers, whether Medes, Persians, or others, it would be presumptuous to attempt an identification of the ethnic background of the Oxus horseman.[24]

The Oxus gold bowl is less easy to attribute primarily because of the relative crudeness of execution of the heads and front feet of the lions. However, the bowl's lobed decoration as well as the repoussé technique are typically Achaemenian,[25]

21 For identification of the Apadana relief figures and the tomb bearers, see G. Walser, *Die Völkerschaften auf den Reliefs von Persepolis* (Berlin, 1966), pp. 53 ff., Falttafel I, and my comments in my review of Walser in *JNES* 28 (1969): 283 f. See also B. Hrouda, *Vorderasien,* vol. I (Munich, 1971), p. 286; and P. R. S. Moorey, *Cemeteries of the First Millennium B.C. at Deve Hüyük,* BAR International Series 87 (London, 1980), p. 55.

22 Viz., H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939), pp. 221 f., pl. 37d, f, h, i, m, n. See also the silver disc in the Oxus treasure in Dalton, *Treasure of the Oxus,* p. 13, no. 24.

23 Moorey, *Cemeteries,* p. 57. In this context it is worth noting the silver rhyton from Erebuni that depicts a heavy-set man riding a horse. The man bears a typical *akinakes* and wears a tapering high headdress: B. N. Arakelian, "Treasure of Silver Artifacts from Erebuni," *Sovietskaya Archeologica* 1 (1971): figs. 1–4, dated to the fifth–fourth centuries B.C. The man is by no means necessarily a Mede. P. Calmeyer "Zu einigen vernachlässigten Aspekten medischer Kunst," in *Proceedings of the IInd Annual Symposium of Archaeological Research in Iran, Iran Bastan Museum, October–November, 1973* (Tehran, 1974), pp. 112, 118, n. 5, dates the Oxus sheath to the second half of the fifth century B.C. on the basis of comparisons with Greek art; Farkas "Horse and Rider in Achaemenid Art," p. 70, also raised this issue but did not develop it further.

24 See n. 20, above. On p. 281, n. 151, Root says that there are no known Achaemenian representations of the king wearing trousers, but she notes that Darius III wears them on the Alexander Mosaic; the Oxus sheath scene does not alter this observation. O. Kimball Armayor, "Herodotus' Catalogue of the Persian Empire . . . ," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 108 (1978): 5, takes a rigid view of trousers contra Herodotus (1.71, 135; 3.87; 5.49; 7.61, 62), arguing that they were never worn by Persians, on which view see Root. There can be little doubt that in battle (as Herodotus stated) and surely in the hunt, Persians, and other people, wore trousers.

25 See, for example, a sixth–fifth century Archaemenian silver bowl excavated at Ushak in western Anatolia (unpublished, in the Ankara Museum) and an example of the same date (and possibly same site) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which D. von Bothmer, "A Greek and Roman Treasury," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (*BMMA*) 42 (1984): 25, no. 18 and also 19, incorrectly labeled "Greek"! Other examples include a silver vessel from Kazbek; see A. M. Tallgren in *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua* 5 (1930): 117, fig. 4,

likewise, the classic Achaemenian circle and comma motifs depicted on the lions' haunches. "Provincial" is a convenient cliché, I admit, but I cannot see how one can exclude this bowl from the Achaemenian corpus merely because it is crude, just as one cannot include it as Median because it is crude.[26] Finally, Herzfeld placed the Oxus gold plaques in the Median period because of the dress of some of the depicted figures and their relationship to figures represented on rock-cut tombs, which he considered to be pre-Achaemenian. We shall return to these tombs below.

Another object that Barnett discovered to be Median is the gold dagger from Chertomlyk in the Crimea. Attribution is revealed in this instance first by analogy: the hunt scene across the hilt connects it to the Median Oxus sheath and secondly because the addorsed calf heads at the hilt's apex are a "typical Urartian motif," a crucial ingredient in Barnett's Median formula (infra).[27] Indeed, the Oxus hunt scene parallel is obvious and pertinent; when properly understood it yields an Achaemenian reference. Furthermore, the addorsed heads are equally relevant for attribution, although they have nothing to do with Urartian art. The "Urartian" parallels cited by Barnett, addorsed calves' heads employed as clamps for mirror handles, one of which is in the British Museum, are either Achaemenian or western Anatolian.[28] Nor, as Barnett also claims, is the silver dipper excavated at Tell Fara, which is embellished with addorsed calf heads, an Urartian artifact. It is more certainly Achaemenian, and the use of calf heads, as well as duck heads, is a classic Achaemenian motif,[29] as is, it need hardly be noted, the motif of addorsed animals (i.e., on column capitals). All the features and style of the Chertomlyk dagger point to its Achaemenian background, as Dalton, Otto, Ghirshman, Amandry, Farkas, and Moorey have already concluded,[30] and we need dwell no longer on demonstrating the obvious.

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and another from the same workshop from Rhodes, *Clara Rhodos* 8 (1936): 179 f., figs. 168, 169; also an example said to have been excavated at Ünye on the Black Sea; see E. Akurgal in *Antike Kunst* 10 (1967): 32 ff., figs. 1–3, pl. 8. 9: 2–6, surely from the Achaemenian period and from a local workshop.

26 Dalton, *Treasure of the Oxus,* p. 10, noted that doubts about the authenticity of the sheath had been raised, but he says nothing of the gold bowl. I know the vessel only from photographs but see no compelling reasons to doubt its ancient date. Herzfeld, "Khattische und khaldische Bronzen," p. 154, considered the bowl to be Urartian.

27 Barnett, "Median Art," pp. 80 ff., 86 ff.

28 Ibid., pp. 89 f., n. 2, fig. 5. For published challenges to Barnett's Urartian attribution of the British Museum mirror, see A. Greifenhagen, "Schmuck und Gerät einer lydischen Mädchens," *Antike Kunst* 8 (1965): 17 f.; A. Oliver, "A Bronze Mirror from Sardis," in D. G. Mitten et al., eds., *Studies Presented to G. M. A. Hanfmann* (Mainz, 1971), pp. 117 f., 120; Moorey, *Cemeteries,* p. 57. The animals on the rim of the British Museum mirror exhibit Achaemenian features, as Akurgal, "Urartäische und altiranische Kunstzentren," p. 124, noted—albeit dating it to the Median period. The Berlin example, published by Greifenhagen, pp. 16 f., pl. 5, is, as that author claims, East Greek in style; it has no addorsed heads as clamps.

29 Barnett, "Median Art," p. 90; he was supported in the Urartian attribution of the Tell Fara dipper by R. Amiran, "Two Luristan Fibulae and an Urartian Ladle from Old Excavations in Palestine," *Iran. Antiqua* 6 (1966): 90 f. For Achaemenian examples, see P. Amandry, "Orfèvrerie achéménide," *Antike Kunst* 1 (1958): 13 ff., 18; idem, *Collection Hélène Stathatos,* vol. 3 (Strasbourg, 1963), pp. 262, 264 f., 267, figs. 158, 163–68; Oliver, "Bronze Mirror from Sardis," p. 117; E. Stern, *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period* (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 74, fig 90; p. 147, figs. 241, 244; p. 152, fig. 254.

30 Dalton, *Treasure of the Oxus,* pp. 13, 18; H. Otto, "Ein achämenidischen Goldwidder," *ZA* 48 (1944): 10, n. 2; 13; Amandry, "Orfèvrerie achéménide," p. 20; Ghirshman, *Ancient Iran,* p. 358; Farkas, "Horse and Rider in Achaemenid Art," p. 67; Moorey, *Cemeteries,* p. 57. Culican, *Medes and Persians,* pp. 137, 139, considers the dagger to be Median; Akurgal, *Urartäische und altiranische Kunstzentren,* p. 124, sees it as a product of "medisch-achämenidischen Stiles." Note that its sheath is decorated in Greek style: M. I. Artamonov, *The Splendor of Scythian Art* (New York, 1969), p. 55, pls. 183, 184.

When we turn to the Kelermes (Caucasus) and the Litoy-Melgunov (north of the Black Sea) *akinakes* sheaths, we enter a new environment and encounter a different set of artistic-cultural problems. Both sheaths are remarkably similar in shape and in decorative scheme, and it is probable that they were made in the same workshop. Art historical analysis indicates this workshop cannot have been an Achaemenian one, either culturally or chronologically. The shaft of both sheaths is decorated with a frieze of typical Urartian *Mischwesen:* on the Melgunev sheath all shoot with a bow; on the Kelermes sheath the shooting creatures alternate with passive striding ones. Also of Urartian style is the pair of winged human figures flanking a tree at the top of the sheath. On the side projection, however, there is a reclining stag bordered by stylized eagles' beaks, both features of classic Scythian style, and the chape is decorated with two confronted Scythian style leonine creatures. The confusion concerning the cultural interpretation of the sheaths is increased by the material associated with them: at Kelermes, a Scythian axe and at Litoy, Urartian furniture fittings were reported. Further associated with the Kelermes finds were a gold petaled bowl and another with repoussé animals, both of which seem to be Achaemenian works.[31]

All scholars concerned with the sheaths agree on the above description and analysis; they differ in their interpretation and perception of the artistic mixture—actually, juxtaposition is the better term—and the nature of the cultural-ethnic workshop that produced them. In 1937 Herzfeld dated the sheaths to the first half of the sixth century B.C., "sicher vorachaemenidisch, dabei so urartaeisch," but in 1941 he placed them in the "Median period," along with the Oxus sheath, and he did not refer to Urartu.[32] Barnett developed and expanded this casual "Median period" attribution with force, and again by fiat, in his cited 1962 article. He rightly recorded the Urartian and Scythian elements but only to announce that the connection of these two styles plus the *akinakes* shape signifies we are in the presence of Median art.[33] The Scythian relationship had already been introduced in a casual manner when, in connection with the Oxus sheath, he referred to the chape represented on the Audience Hall *akinakes.*

A close reading of Barnett's conclusions suggests that in fact he began his studies with the idea that the Kelermes and Litoy sheaths were Median and then isolated the co-existence of Urartian and Scythian motifs, thereby producing a formula to demonstrate what already had been determined. But Scythian and Urartian and Median are discrete cultural entities, two of which are known, the other unknown, and simple arithmetic cannot yield an archaeological reality, Median. The unknown has not been revealed.

It has already been noted that the *akinakes* sheath cannot be considered to be a Median artifact, an object characteristic of Medes in any period, and therefore it may not be brought into the discussion as a factor in a Median equation. Nor indeed may the chape on the Audience Hall relief, which displays a curled animal in pure Scythian style, for this particular decoration is an Achaemenian period artifact, as all scholars agree.[34] In any event, the chapes on the sheaths under review here are composed of a

[31] See my "Excavated and Unexcavated Achaemenian Art," pp. 25 f.

[32] Herzfeld in *AMI* 8 (1937): 135, n. 1.

[33] Barnett, "Median Art," pp. 82 ff., 90 f.; in "Persepolis," on p. 76, Barnett produced a more ambitious formula or equation for Median art: Urartian plus Assyrian plus Scythian plus Phoenician elements. What happened to the Assyrian and Phoenician elements in the five-year interval was not explained.

[34] Idem, "Median Art," p. 79. For discussions of these Achaemenian chapes, see the comments of the

different Scythian form. We have thus to concern ourselves with the iconography and style of the decoration on the sheaths, and others who have studied them have arrived at conclusions other than that suggested by Barnett. Aside from Herzfeld's 1937 note, the only other scholar known to me who concluded that the sheaths were Urartian works, incorporating Scythian elements, was H. Kantor.[35] Others have taken the contrary position, that they are Scythian-made artifacts incorporating Urartian elements, some singling out the non-Urartian form of the sheath as crucial to the argument.[36]

The problem to be investigated here is truly complex, as it involves understanding why the motifs of two distinct cultures appear juxtaposed on one artifact, and some detailed discussion is inevitable. First of all, I do not think that geography, the location of the find-spots, should play a role in analysis; the final resting place of an object ought not necessarily determine or influence a discussion of the cultural background of the artist(s).[37] Further, the position taken here is that art historical analysis per se cannot resolve the problem of cultural manufacture; we are aware of what is Scythian and what is Urartian; we are unaware of why or in what manner they came to be juxtaposed. Thus we are limited to asking certain appropriate questions, the purpose of which is to define the goal and the problems, but questions that I believe are not readily answered or resolved except by inclination. These questions would be asked even if we did not have Barnett's Median formula before us. When were the sheaths made? Who commissioned the manufacture of the sheaths, an Urartian, a Scythian, or a third party? Who staffed the workshop in which the order was fulfilled; was the artist an Urartian who was trained and skilled in Scythian art, a Scythian equally trained in Urartian art, or did an Urartian and a Scythian artist work side by side, one decorating the shaft, the other the added chape and side projection?

The first question may be answered with little difficulty, for here consensus is more readily achieved than with the others. From what we know of the chronology of

following: B. Goldman, "Achaemenian Chapes," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 43–54; R. Stucky, "Achämenidische Ortbänder," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (*AA*) 11 (1976): 13–23; P. Bernard, "A propos des bouterolles de forreaux achéménides," *Revue archéologique* 2 (1976): 227–46; S. Sorokin, "The Curled-up Animal from Ziwiye" (in Russian), *Soobscheniya Gosudarstvennaya Akademia, Hermitazha* 34 (1972): 75–78; Litvinskiy and Pichikyan, in *Acta Antiqua* 27 (1983): 49 ff., 54. Note that a circular bone plaque excavated at Sardis (*BASOR* 192 [1966]: 14, fig. 9; *BASOR* 211 [1973]: 33, fig. 11; *Biblical Archaeologist* 29 [1966]: 45, fig. 5) seems to be a solid pommel, not a chape as claimed.

35 H. Kantor, "A Fragment of a Gold Appliqué from Ziwiye . . . ," *JNES* 19 (1960): 13; in n. 49 she cites Herzfeld's 1937 reference. G. Azarpay, *Urartian Art and Artifacts* (San Francisco, 1968), pp. 70 f., 73, believes on the one hand that Urartian models or "perhaps even Urartian craftmanship" may have played a role; but then, because the motifs are of "mixed style," and not a "normal pattern of Urartian art," they are not Urartian works. But, of course, there is no mixed style, there are two separate styles. B. Goldman, "The Animal Style of Ziwiye," *IPEK* 24 (1974–77): 55, 61, says that the Litoy sheath "may be an Urartian import," but on p. 67, he supports Barnett's views on Median art; a contradiction seems evident here.

36 Barnett, "Median Art," p. 91, n. 2; also Ghirshman, *Ancient Iran,* pp. 28, 303 f., 327; Akurgal, *Urartäische und altiranische Kunstzentren,* pp. 123 f.; Stucky, "Achämenidische Ortbänder," p. 20; Moorey, *Cemeteries,* pp. 56 f.; B. B. Piotrovskii, *Urartu* (London, 1967), pp. 21, 97 ff. Dalton, *Treasure of the Oxus,* pp. xxxv f., considered the frieze to be Assyrian; see also J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas* (London, 1980), p. 258.

37 Thus Barnett, "Median Art," p. 93, explains the presence of the sheaths in Scythian tombs as booty or gifts from the Medes acquired when the Scythians were in Iran. This conclusion follows from the view that the sheaths are Median, but if not Median, then another explanation must be sought for their distribution.

Urartian art, the sheaths were made before the early sixth century B.C., unless Urartian artists continued to function for new masters after the collapse of their kingdom, concerning which we know nothing. From the Scythian side, anytime within the late seventh or sixth centuries B.C. would be acceptable. Thus, a time between ca. 650 and 550 B.C. seems to be viable, and in fact it is a date accepted by all scholars concerned with the sheaths' chronology.

Concerning the second question, there are at least the following possible resolutions. An Urartian king (or two kings) commissioned the sheaths from a Scythian (a captive or ally) as an exotic possession, perhaps or perhaps not assigning one of his best artists to assist. The prominent Urartian motif along the shaft would in this scheme have been an identity marker on a non-Urartian object, bearing the message when displayed "I am an Urartian (even though I bear a foreign weapon)." Or, equally possible, a Scythian king could have commissioned the sheaths, presumably a typical Scythian weapon at this time, perhaps or perhaps not employing an Urartian artist, Here, however, one must explain why the Urartian scene was so prominently displayed. In a third scenario, we could conceive of an Urartian or a Scythian king commissioning the sheaths as gifts from one king to the other, gifts reflecting the art (message) of both the donor and the recipient.

Finally, a non-Scythian, non-Urartian third-party may have commissioned the sheaths. On the one hand, a king of Land X, itself having or not having an artistic tradition of its own, may have summoned to his court a Scythian and an Urartian, or a Scythian/Urartian trained in both schools, to create bicultural artifacts for some particular reason (an exotic curio?). On the other hand, we could conceive the specific thrust of Barnett's concept; a king from a land without artistic traditions may have summoned the appropriate artists because he intellectually and consciously chose as the artistic expression of his land (state) the juxtaposition of Scythian and Urartian motifs, anticipating that the contemporary (not to mention the future) world would recognize it as such. With the acceptance of either one of these schemes, another question ineluctably surfaces: which of the many pre-Achaemenian states in Iran or in the northern regions was the third party?[38]

Concerning the workshop staffing, a neutral position recognizes that archaeological and ethnographical evidence indicates that an artist trained in one cultural tradition could reproduce the art of another and, equally, that two artists could work on the same object.[39]

[38] Barnett ("The Treasure of Ziwiye," *Iraq* 18 [1956]: 114) revealed the characteristics of Mannaean art as "crude, if lively, but barbarous and provincial in the extreme," and he even presented the archaeological community with actual examples, all picked at random from the vast Iranian scrapbasket.

[39] For an object made in two parts and decorated by two separate artists, see my article "A Bronze Vase from Iran and Its Greek Connections," *MMJ* 5 (1972): 25–50, figs. 1–11. To this, compare a vessel very similar in form and style, also made in two parts but here apparently decorated by one artist described by P. R. S. Moorey in G. Markoe, ed., *Ancient Bronzes Ceramics and Seals* (Los Angeles, 1981), no. 415. Although in the first instance both artists shared the same artistic tradition, the concept of two artists working on a single object is established empirically. For ethnographic evidence of this same phenomenon, see M. A. Hardin, "The Cognitive Basis of Productivity in a Decorative Art Style . . . ," in C. Kramer, ed., *Ethnoarchaeology* (New York, 1979), pp. 92 f. For artists of one ethnic, cultural background manufacturing works of another, see the Tomb of Petosiris in Egypt, where Egyptian craftsmen are depicted making Achaemenian style objects; see my article "Excavated and Unexcavated Ancient Near Eastern Art," in T. C. Young, Jr. and L. D. Levine, eds., *Mountains and*

I have no decisive suggestions to offer concerning the intriguing problem of sorting out the mental and physical activities involved in the creation of the sheaths—although I am inclined to believe that two artists participated. Further, I find the third-party thesis, in particular that articulated by Barnett, to be difficult to accept; it floats without any apparatus of archaeological control and is little more than uncharted speculation. But even if some scholars persist in accepting it, I would argue that it is not viable to claim that the third party was a Mede to the exclusion of another ethnic personality. And, to confront one more issue, while the majority of scholars affirm the view that the sheaths were commissioned by Scythians, the possibility that Urartians were involved cannot be excluded matter-of-factly. In the final analysis, no archaeologist knows with certainty the answer to the questions raised; the ancient message, written boldly on the sheaths, remains at present unread.

* * *

We turn now to the so-called Ziwiye treasure. As I have written elsewhere about the vertiginous problems associated with this treasure, about its provenience, chronology, perceived artistic backgrounds, and characteristics, I confine myself here to the issue of its alleged role in revealing Median art. Various scholars have recognized in the Ziwiye treasure the art of the Mannaeans, Assyrians, Urartians, Cimmerians, Scythians, Babylonians, and the Greeks,[40] but it was M. Falkner, in 1952 shortly after the first publications on the treasure appeared, who was the first to introduce the Medes. Concerning herself with the background of the artist who created the gold gorget, she suggested that "Man könnte an einen medischen Künstler denken," and she cited in support of her judgment the DSf inscription and certain motifs found in Achaemenian art.[41] Ten years later, Barnett, applying his Scythian-Urartian formula, argued that those pieces in the treasure that contained a combination of these styles, for example, the gold stag and goat plaque, are Median works. So secure was his conclusion, he found it possible to claim as an archaeological reality that the treasure derived from the tomb of a "Median chieftain."[42]

Others accepted this view, more or less. Porada at first considered Barnett's Median art/tomb interpretation to be "very convincing," but later she took a more cautious position, deciding it was "preferable . . . to reserve judgement on the label to be given to the Ziwiye treasure . . . . "[43] Ghirshman also shifted his position on the nature of the treasure but more dramatically and in a different direction than Porada. At first he confessed not to know what the treasure represented, then that it was a Scythian

Lowlands (Malibu, 1977), p. 194, n. 100. Note that M. Rostovtzeff, *Ionians and Greeks in South Russia* (Oxford, 1922), p. 50, believed that one artist "fashioned" the separate parts of the Kelermes sheath (a Scythian?).

[40] See my "'Ziwiye' and Ziwiye: The Forgery of a Provenience," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 4 (1977): 197–219, esp. pp. 205 ff., 207 f.; see also K. R. Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery* (London, 1971), pp. 206 f.; T. Sulimirski, "The Background of the Ziwiye Find . . . ," *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology* 15 (1978): 7–31; R. Ghirshman, *Tombe princière de Ziwiyé* (Paris, 1979); and B. Hrouda, "Der 'Schatzfund' von Ziwiyah . . . ," *Iran. Antiqua* 18 (1983): 97–108.

[41] See M. Falkner in "Der Schatz von Ziwiye," *AfO* 16 (1952): 132.

[42] Barnett, "Median Art," pp. 84 f., 91 f., 94 pl. 4a–c.

[43] Porada in *7000 Years of Iranian Art* (Washington, D.C., 1964–65), p. 26; idem, *Art of Ancient Iran*, p. 134. For the record, Culican, *Medes and Persians*, pp. 46 f., repeats Barnett's views; and H. A. Potratz, "Die Skythen und Vorderasien," *Orientalia*, n.s. 28 (1959): 67 f., had earlier connected the Ziwiye treasure to the Medes.

treasure deriving from a Scythian prince's tomb, and still later that it came from a tomb of a "Scytho-Median" prince, reflecting here his view that there was a cultural-political symbiosis of the two peoples (cf. his conclusions about Luristan, supra). Concomitant with the latter conclusion, he maintained, with no documentation and without calling attention to a specific object, that Median art was formulated from "many different strains—Urartian, Assyrian, local Mannaean, perhaps even Ionian . . . ." Twenty pages later in the same publication, after noting that the Ziwiye material "has much to teach us about Median art," he added the oxymoronic non-sequitur "it seems impossible to differentiate the [material culture] of the Medes from the Scythians and Cimmerians."[44] In her book on ancient Near Eastern jewelry, Maxwell-Hyslop also accepted the conclusion that Median elements are to be recognized in the Ziwiye corpus. As evidence to support this claim, she singled out two gold roundels of (to my eyes) Achaemenian style which, on the basis of comparison with two forgeries (infra), enabled her to conclude that they could be products of a Median goldsmith.[45]

We need not dwell any longer on the Ziwiye-Median equation, for the same arguments, to be sure with more permutations, brought forth in the discussion of the Kelermes-Litoy sheaths, obtain here, a resort to speculation and singling out of motifs and objects without reference to verifiable data. And whereas previously a modest equation of which Western Asiatic motifs or elements constitute Median art was presented, in the case of Ziwiye the grouping on the left side of the equation has been unabashedly modified and enlarged.

* * *

About a half-dozen other stray objects and types have from time to time been labeled Median artifacts. G. Pudelko, writing in the 1930s and ignoring what was even then known about Urartian art, cited a typical Urartian winged bull cauldron attachment as "eine vielleicht medischer Stierkopf."[46] Ghirshman believed that a silver animal-headed vessel "from Kaplantu" near Ziwiye was to be attributed "sous réserve" to the Medians,[47] presumably solely because of its apparent date and the geographic location of the alleged find-spot. E. Akurgal believed he could recognize as coming from the Median period, and reflecting at least "halb medisch" elements, the very same bronze mirror in the British Museum that Barnett had previously attributed to the Urartians.[48] A class of axes with a full bodied lion in relief, either on the blade or at the socket, one of which is claimed to have been "found at Hamadan," has also been furnished a Median label by R. Dussaud and Barnett, although, as P. Calmeyer has demonstrated, they are second-millennium B.C. products.[49]

[44] For the bibliography on Ghirshman's views, see again my article "Ziwiye," pp. 205 f.; see esp. Ghirshman, *Ancient Iran,* pp. 100, 104, 124.

[45] Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery,* pp. 210 f. For one of the forgeries, a gold vessel in the Cincinnati Art Museum, see infra; for the other, see my article "Bronze Vase from Iran," p. 184, no. 156, a gold plaque in the Metropolitan Museum.

[46] G. Pudelko, "Altpersische Armbänder," *AfO* 9 (1933–34): 87. Pudelko's Urartian bull attachment is discussed by G. M. A. Hanfmann, "Four Urartian Bulls' Heads," *Anatolian Studies* 6 (1956): 205–13, esp. pp. 207 f., no. 2, Louvre AO 17.207.

[47] R. Ghirshman, "Notes iraniennes XI: Le Rhyton en Iran," *Artibus Asiae* 25 (1962): 75, 77, fig. 19.

[48] See supra, and n. 28. In *The Art of Greece* (New York, 1968), p. 217, Akurgal refers to the object as "Median work."

[49] R. Dussaud in *A Survey of Persian Art* (Tokyo, 1964–65), vol. 1, 266, pl. 52 C; Barnett, "Art of Bactria," pp. 46 f.; P. Calmeyer, *Datierbare Bronzen aus Luristan und Kirmanshah* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 39 ff.; see also my "Excavated and Unexcavated Achaemenian Art," p. 34.

Finally, in this category is a group of six fibulae in the Feroughi collection in Tehran that warrants some attention. These fibulae have an arc terminating in a Pazuzu head and are probably of seventh-century B.C. date. At least two of these examples have on the opposite arc a clothed female with hands clasped before the chest and two ram/mouflon heads at the apex on which the Pazuzu and female stand, and three have a bird opposite the Pazuzu.[50] When Ghirshman first published the Feroughi Pazuzu fibulae (in 1964), he arbitrarily claimed they derived from Luristan, but later (1970) he attributed them to either Luristan or Kirmanshah, and he suggested that they were imports from Assyria. Calmeyer originally (1969) supported the Luristan provenience but later categorically transferred the alleged find-spot of all six fibulae to the Kirmanshah area in western Iran. He then proclaimed them to be Median artifacts, an attribution recently accepted by J. Curtis.[51] Calmeyer argued (if I follow him fully) that the cast-loop to hold chains and seals existing on some of the Feroughi fibulae, the fact that some have what may be a stamp seal at the apex, plus the presence of the Pazuzu heads, indicate a peculiar quality of *Iranian* fibulae. He further argued that no examples of this fibula type occur outside of his fictive Kirmanshah area.

Now, fibulae in other areas of the Near East also had apotropaic value; fibulae with chains and seals occur at Nimrud in Mesopotamia, as noted by Calmeyer, and at Ras Shamra in Syria, not noted by Calmeyer;[52] and fibulae of the Pazuzu type do occur outside of Iran. As I noted elsewhere in another context when publishing a related fibula in the Schimmel collection,[53] the type is Assyrian. Moreover, an example with a Pazuzu head on one arc, a bird on the other, and a stamp at the apex has been excavated, not in Luristan or Kirmanshah or elsewhere in Iran, but at Megiddo, in Israel.[54] Furthermore, and not insignificant to the argument, the archaeological provenience(s) of the Feroughi fibulae remains unknown, given their existence in a private collection and their purchase from plunderers. Whether they reached Tehran as a consequence of recent plunder in Iran, or recent plunder and modern trade from Iraq or even Israel, can never be revealed by investigation.

[50] R. Ghirshman, "La Fibule en Iran," *Iran. Antiqua* 4 (1964): 97, nos. 13–15, pl. 25; idem, "Le Pazuzu et les Fibules de Luristan," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 46 (1970): 123 ff., pl. 2; Calmeyer, "Zu einigen vernachlässigten Aspekten medischer Kunst," pp. 114 f., D, E, F. Ghirshman's nos. 13, 14 lack the pin, but cf. Calmeyer's E, with the spring on the Pazuzu head. Calmeyer's F consists of only one "arc" and is odd: there seems to be only one ram/mouflon head at the "apex"; a bird's head "catch" is on top of the Pazuzu head (we would expect it on the opposite arc); and there seems to be no apex. If this object is a fibula, presumably there was a female at the opposite arc. Nos. 15, D, and F have the ram/mouflon apex heads, nos. 13, 14, and E have the bird.

[51] Calmeyer, *Datierbare Bronzen,* p. 99, figs. 100, 101: note that fig. 100 is not, to my eyes, Ghirshman's "La Fibule en Iran," (1964), no. 14, as is claimed; I do not know what this example is (a female head and a Pazuzu head on opposite arcs); idem, "Zu einigen vernachlässigten Aspekten medischer Kunst," pp. 114 ff.; Curtis, *Nush-i Jan III,* pp. 23, 33.

[52] See my article "Fibulae Represented on Sculpture," *JNES* 26 (1967): 82 ff. For fibulae associated with chains, see M. Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains,* vol. 1 (London, 1966), pp. 114 f., fig. 58; C. Schaeffer in *ILN,* April 27, 1935, p. 686, fig. 2; for two examples from Luristan (excavated!), see L. Vanden Berghe, "Les Fibules provenant des fouilles au Pusht-i Kuh, Luristan," *Iran. Antiqua* 13 (1978): 51, nos. 10, 11, fig. 9, pl. 2.

[53] See my article "Five Additions to the Norbert Schimmel Collection," *Acta Praehistorica et Archaeologica* 7/8 (1976–77): 316, no. 3. The Schimmel fibula has a female on each of the two arcs; they are of the same style as those on the Feroughi fibulae.

[54] Amiran, "Two Luristan Fibulae and an Urartian Ladle," pp. 88 ff., pl. 17, 1; Amiran recognizes the Megiddo fibula to be an import there, but uncritically following Ghirshman, she claims the import came from Luristan.

At least three of the Feroughi fibulae and the Schimmel example can easily be defended as Assyrian forms. The examples with ram/mouflon heads joining at the apex are unique among fibulae and the Pazuzu corpus, and one tends to think of an Iranian rather than a Mesopotamian background for the animal heads. I find it difficult to decide with some certainty whether these examples should be considered as artifacts "made in Iran," or if we have before us merely another form or variety of an Assyrian fibula. If made in Iran, indeed a possibility albeit not archaeologically proven, they would be "local" copies of an Assyrian fibula with "local" modifications. But if such be the case, what "local" culture decided on the modifications? To name the locality in question, if indeed it is an actual issue, to maintain that these two fibulae or, with Calmeyer, all six of the Feroughi fibulae were made by Medes and no other people, is to abuse the evidence, which consists of six unexcavated objects in Tehran and one excavated example from Megiddo.

If the previous group of stray Near Eastern objects cannot meaningfully be accepted as Median artifacts, the next group to be considered cannot intelligibly be accepted as ancient Near Eastern artifacts, let alone Median ones. I am aware of at least seven objects, all unexcavated, all presented to the archaeological community by antiquity (?) dealers, that are manifestly not the products of an ancient Near Eastern artist but notwithstanding have been baptized by various scholars as examples of Median art. I hold the view that in each case the forger was in fact attempting to create a work in the style of Achaemenian art, but he misunderstood and failed to attain the correct subtle form and style of that art and, in a few adventurous cases, created forms not known in that art. The forgers knew nothing of Medes, but they knew the market value of Achaemenian antiquities, and they knew from past experience that scholars would welcome their merchandise. So eager has been the desire to isolate Median art from the mass of disparate material "said to come from Iran," so eager the attempt to recognize what is surely there, that these artifices have been transmogrified by ingenuous scholarship into pre-Achaemenian art. Rarely has it been considered as a possible interpretation that these works, shouting their deviation from Achaemenian style (a fact noted by all commentators), might be modern creations, post- and not pre-Achaemenian.

The best-known, because the most cited, example of "Median" art ("ein charakteristischer Vertreter der vorpersischen Kunst") is a gold vessel in the Cincinnati Art Museum. The vessel has a sharply carinated body and two janus-headed horned animal handles, and it is, appropriately, claimed by its original publisher to "have been found at Hamadan."[55] For the shape and configuration of the vessel, for the sharp, stylized, and poorly—inaccurately—executed decoration of winged lions in relief, there is no parallel in Achaemenian or ancient Near Eastern art; and the feet of the animal

[55] See again my article in Young and Levine, eds., *Mountains and Lowlands,* p. 184, no. 152; and idem, *Addenda* to this article (Malibu, 1979), p. 4, no. 24, for the bibliography of scholars who published this piece as genuine: now add Akurgal, *Urartäisch und altiranische Kunstzentren,* p. 123 (also for the quote in my text); Ghirshman, *Tombe princière de Ziwiyé,* p. 21; G. G. Beloni, *Iranian Art* (London, 1969), pl. 40. Cf. P. Calmeyer, "Hamadan," in *RLA,* vol. 4, p. 66 [note that in my article "Excavated and Unexcavated Achaemenian Art," in nn. 12, 33, above, I incorrectly stated that Calmeyer in this publication claimed that the gold Achaemenian objects in the Metropolitan Museum derived from Hamadan. In fact, on p. 65, left, he raised doubts about this attribution. I here correct my error and apologize; I apparently misread my notes].

handles rest directly on the vessel, contrary to proper Achaemenian practice. Another gold vessel of similar form and relief decoration, this one in a private collection, has lion handles, and its shape and execution are equally unparalleled in style and execution in Achaemenian and ancient Near Eastern art. Here there is an additional motif of two lions sharing one *en face* head, a motif found on still another forgery.[56] To defend these two manifestly modern misunderstandings, to ignore the loud and clear message of an unexcavated object supplied with a forged provenience, is to mock proper archaeological and art historical analysis. A third vessel of gold, an animal-headed cup now in Tehran, is an object that I also believe is not ancient; Ghirshman considered it to be ancient and "sous réserve" Median.[57]

A gold strip in the British Museum depicting a winged lion in relief is also to my mind not the work of an ancient artist, although claimed as Median by Barnett; nor is a gold handle with addorsed lapis lazuli lions at the top, also in the British Museum, to be considered the work of an ancient artist.[58] A silver bowl in the Ashmolean Museum decorated in the interior with two crossed lions was originally published as Median and from Hamadan; subsequently one of its publishers has recognized it as a modern work.[59]

Finally, in the Louvre is a fragment of a white stone head executed in barely recognizable Achaemenian style. A. Parrot and P. Amiet have identified it as most probably a Median work because its character is just not quite Achaemenian in either style or execution: the hair, beard curls, mustache positioning, eyes, ears, nose—in short, everything about the head is wrong.[60] Furthermore, there is a debate between the two scholars involved in the head's presentation concerning whether, inasmuch as the provenience is accepted as Hamadan (although purchased in Switzerland!), it is a portrait of Cyaxares or Astyages, a thought that surely did not enter the mind of the forger. The Louvre head joins the other forgeries of Achaemenian objects discussed above in the repertory of new Median art.

We turn now to the final group of objects encountered in the Median odyssey, works that have actually been excavated in Iran itself. At the present time, perhaps the least controversial element in the alleged Median corpus is the group of rock-cut tombs: Dukkan-i Daud, Farhad-u-Shirin, Sakavand, Fakhrika in Iran, and Kizkapan in Iraq. Herzfeld gave them prominence as Median tombs because of their geographical positions and because of the Median dress on some of the figures in relief on the tombs at Dukkan-i Daud and Kizkapan, to which he compared the gold plaques

[56] See again my article in Young and Levine, eds., *Mountains and Lowlands,* p. 184, no. 153; cf. no. 156 (see n. 45 above); see again my *Addenda,* p. 4, no. 25. Note that the roundel with the head shared by two lions discussed by Maxwell-Hyslop, *Western Asiatic Jewellery,* p. 210, may be genuine; see another probably genuine example of this motif, this time on a pre-Achaemenian, Luristan disc pin, Ghirshman, *Ancient Iran,* fig. 384.

[57] Ghirshman, "Notes iraniennes XI," pp. 75, 77, fig. 18; see again my article in Young and Levine, eds., *Mountains and Lowlands,* p. 185, no. 166; and my *Addenda,* p. 4, no. 29.

[58] For the gold strip, see Barnett, "Median Art," p. 78, pl. 1a; and my article "Ziwiye," p. 211. The gold and lapis handle (135908) has been published as a postcard dated 1975: "Median or Early Achaemenian."

[59] See my article in Young and Levine, eds., *Mountains and Lowlands,* p. 184, no. 154.

[60] A. Parrot, "Acquisitions et inédits du Musée du Louvre," *Syria* 44 (1967): 247 ff.; Amiet is quoted in the text. I regret not including this piece in my 1977 paper on forgeries (in *Mountains and Lowlands*) but correct the omission here; one need only read Root, *King and Kingship,*, pp. 114 ff., to be convinced of its modern birth.

from the Oxus treasure (supra); he dated Sakavand to the early Achaemenian period, to the year 521 B.C.[61] A few scholars, including I. M. Diakanov, H. H. von der Osten, and Ghirshman, also believed the tombs to be Median, but recent scholarship has rejected this early chronology. Research based on more refined dating of tool marks and stylistic analysis of the columns before some of the tomb openings indicates that they are Achaemenian or later. We still seek the tombs of the Medes.[62]

When Stronach originally published a bronze Pazuzu head excavated at Nush-i Jan, he considered it "not at all unlikely to have been looted from Assyria."[63] Now, whether it was looted from Assyria or thence derived by more peaceful means is not of course known, but its Mesopotamian/Assyrian origin is almost certain.[64] A Mesopotamian attribution and origin were nevertheless rejected by Calmeyer, who, because he had demonstrated to his satisfaction that the six Feroughi Pazuzu fibulae were made in western Iran by Medes (supra), added the Nush-i Jan Pazuzu head to the same Median repertory.[65] In the recent publication of the small finds from Nush-i Jan, Curtis expressed agreement with Calmeyer, and he also employed the Feroughi fibulae as supporting evidence.[66] An examination of the form and style of the head reveals to me, as well as to D. Stronach, no feature or characteristic that distinguishes it from other Pazuzus excavated in Mesopotamia. Consequently, to label a typical Mesopotamian artifact as Median begs many questions and implicitly denies the possibility of recognizing the difference between Mesopotamian and Median art: if the Nush-i Jan Pazuzu head is Median, which Pazuzu heads are Mesopotamian? Moreover, even were we to assume, or guess, that the head was a locally made copy of an Assyrian original, a conclusion Curtis is willing to accept, the head is a faithful copy. Accepted as such, the head could be understood as an artifact apparently used by Medes at Nush-i Jan but not as an example of Median art, a crucial distinction, indeed.

Influential in the attempt to interpret the Nush-i Jan Pazuzu head as Median is the combination of geographical and chronological data, the focus being an object of a certain date excavated at a Median site. The methodology is of course correct, although in this instance, it is argued, misapplied. A broad geographical-chronological approach was also undertaken with respect to another object excavated at a Median site. In 1914 French archaeologists excavated briefly at Hamadan, the capital city of the Medes. Among the finds were fragments of a bronze vessel with a curved spout terminating in a lion's head and with a plaque attachment at the rear of the vessel depicting a winged male figure; it was probably made sometime between the late ninth

[61] Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient Near East,* pp. 200 ff.

[62] I. M. Diakonov apud R. Ghirshman in review in *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 15 (1958): 261; von der Osten, *Die Welt der Perser,* pp. 56 f.; Ghirshman, *Ancient Iran,* pp. 87 ff. For the lower chronology see H. von Gall, "Zu den 'medischen' Felsgräbern in nordwestiran und iraqi Kurdistan," *AA* 1 (1966): 19 ff.; Porada, *Art of Ancient Iran,* pp. 138 f.; D. Stronach, *Pasargadae* (London, 1978), pp. 283 f.; idem in "Achaemenid Village I at Susa and the Persian Migration to Fars," *Iraq* 36 (1974): 246 f.; de Francovitch, "Achaemenid Architecture," p. 257.

[63] D. Stronach, "Tepe Nush-i Jan: A Mound in Media," *BMMA* 27 (1968): 185, fig. 14.

[64] For discussion and bibliography of Pazuzu heads see M. Noveck in Oscar White Mucarella, ed., *Ladders to Heaven* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 139 f., 318 f.

[65] Calmeyer, "Zu einigen vernachlässigten Aspekten medischer Kunst," pp. 114 ff.

[66] Curtis, *Nush-i Jan III,* pp. 23, 33 f.

and the seventh centuries B.C.[67] Several other examples of this vessel form, with either the same curved spout or a vertical-horizontal one and with a figured plaque attachment, are known courtesy of plunderers, and the Hamadan vessel remains the sole excavated example.[68] In addition to this form, a number of other metal spouted vessels with vertical-horizontonal spout and without the figured plaque have been excavated in Iran at Marlik Tepe, Sialk B, and Tepe Guran; and many stray, unexcavated examples, all attributed to Iran, exist in collections.[69] There is no doubt that these metal spouted vessels, both figured and plain, are Iranian, that is, they were made somewhere in Iran.

Now, whereas in 1969 Calmeyer stressed a Luristan provenience for the majority of the stray vessels, in 1974 he played down this alleged provenience, stressed the importance of the Hamadan find, and concluded that the sites where the vessels were found ("gesicherten Fundorte") constitute a "Gebiet das im 8. Jahrhundert nur medisch sein kann"; therefore he believed that the vessels are Median.[70] Notwithstanding this claim, the places where the plain metal vessels were excavated encompass a wide area in Iran, and it is archaeologically not possible to assign them to one manufacturing or cultural center. As for the Hamadan vessel with its figured plaque, it stands alone without reference to any fixed datum that would allow it to be considered as either an import or a locally made work. The style of the figured plaque is best described as "western Iranian," a general term indicating that there is insufficient data to realize cultural differentiation among the many first millennium B.C. artifacts deriving from western Iran.[71] Indeed, it is not impossible that the Hamadan vessel is a Median work of the pre-unification period, but I would argue that the Median label should be kept in parentheses, so to speak, and that at present the vessel be considered simply a product of western Iran.

* * *

Calmeyer is aware that his identification of the Pazuzu fibulae, the Nush-i Jan Pazuzu head, and the metal spouted vessels as artifacts made by Medes does not thereby furnish scholars with a clear-cut, unified Median style; they are not products of a *Staatkunst*.[72] Inherent in this conception is its own dissolution. If modern scholars

67 Calmeyer, "Zu einigen vernachlässigten Aspekten medischer Kunst," pp. 113 f., figs. 3–5; see again my "Excavated and Unexcavated Achaemenian Art," p. 31, figs. 7, 8.

68 For other spouted vessels with figured rear plaques, see Calmeyer, *Datierbare Bronzen,* p. 100, fig. 104, Cc, 102, Au; J. Waldbaum, "Luristan Bronzes," *Record of the Art Museum Princeton University* 32 (1978): 9, figs, 2, 3; P. Amiet, *Les Antiquités du Luristan* (Paris, 1976), no. 90. See also *The World of Persian Pottery: Gluck Collection* (Tokyo, 1980), no. 66, which (if genuine) has some form of plaque at the rear.

69 See Calmeyer, *Datierbare Bronzen,* pp. 99 ff. for the references; unfortunately, he treats the unexcavated examples as if they were excavated, assigning a Luristan provenience to many and accepting other unexcavated examples as deriving from Tepe Giyan and Khurvin; his alleged distribution map on p. 104, fig. 107 is therefore skewed. A number of plain metal spouted vessels have been excavated at Hasanlu, remain unpublished.

70 Calmeyer, "Zu einigen vernachlässigten Aspekten medischer Kunst," p. 114; idem, *Datierbare Bronzen,* pp. 149 f.; Hrouda, *Vorderasien,* vol. 1, p. 286.

71 P. R. S. Moorey, *Ancient Persian Bronzes in the Adam Collection* (London, 1974), p. 72, notes that the figured plaques resemble the figures holding two animals at bay on a non-Luristan cheekpiece, no. 37A.

72 Calmeyer, "Zu einigen vernachlässigten Aspekten medischer Kunst," pp. 116 f.

cannot isolate and articulate about Median style and art, if Median art never achieved a self-evident style or iconography, manifest either on mundane or sumptuous works, how then can an archaeologist recognize an object as Median? Logically extended, Calmeyer's conception actually permits any first millennium B.C. object, presumably limited to those excavated in or "said to come from" Iran, to be identified by personal intuition as one made by Medes: precisely what has in fact been accomplished over the years.

Scholarly research on Median art is somewhat in the same situation as that concerned with Hurrian art.[73] Archaeologists and art historians, "knowing" it must exist, seek it and find it; the topos is the same in both cases. Both nevertheless remain elusive, paradoxically outside of our present comprehension. If any of the above discussed objects or still others are Median-made, Median art in some ideal historical reality and independently of the rejections presented here, they are so without our awareness and exist unperceived by the modern world.[74]

[73] For a discussion of "Hurrian" art and the impossibility of recognizing and defining it, see M. T. Barrelet el al., *Méthodologie et critique, I: Problèmes concernant les Hurrites* (Paris, 1977). The Urkish lions (about which I plan to write elsewhere) have a bona fide Hurrian inscription, but stylistically they are not distinguishable from Akkadian or Ur III art of the second half of the third millennium B.C. As such, the lions epitomize the problem of identifying Hurrian art, distinct from the art of other Near Eastern cultures.

[74] Alas, the negative aspects of this study do not end, for not only are Median art and artifacts unperceived in our time, so are the Medes themselves: in the sense that (leaving Persepolis aside) not a single figure depicted in Near Eastern art can be recognized with security as a Mede, a Mede *strictu sensu,* not a *Zagrosbewohner.* I make this strong statement with ease, and in spite of the fact that a number of scholars think otherwise and have presumed to recognize Medes represented in art at "Ziwiye," on stray objects, on Assyrian reliefs, on Nimrud ivories, viz., Barnett, *Iraq* 18 (1956): 116; idem, in *SPA* 14 (1967): 3,000 f., figs. 1,061–63; von der Osten, *Die Welt der Perser,* p. 57; C. K. Wilkinson, "More Details on Ziwiye," *Iraq* 22 (1960): 217; Culican, *Medes and Persians,* p. 148; Mallowan, *Nimrud and Its Remains,* p. 250, fig. 215; Ghirshman, "Un Mède sur les bas-reliefs de Nimrud," *Iraq* 36 (1974): 37 f., pls. 3 and 4; Sulimirski, "Background of the Ziwiye Find . . . ," p. 26; Root, *King and Kingship,* pp. 115, 260; *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Guide* (1983): 57, no. 36. On some of these alleged identifications, all achieved by guesswork, see the comments of M. Wäfler, *Nicht-Assyrer neuassyrischer Darstellungen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1975), pp. 118, n. 601; 210, n. 1,089; 277, n. 1,408. Even the very appearance of the Medes is denied us!

My aim in writing this paper has been to share the results of an examination of the claims made over the last eighty years that Median art is an entity capable of being recognized by modern scholars. My conclusions are entirely negative with respect to these claims, but I strongly believe that the results are positive in the sense *démolir pour mieux bâtir.* Perhaps now that the table is cleared, we can start afresh, beginning with the questions of what is Media, what is Median. Perhaps only then can we confront the other question, why is there no Median art?